

Volunteer Voice

Breaking News

The month of January is one of new beginnings and transitions which makes it a perfect time to introduce you to our newest team member, Jennifer Norber. As our Integrative Therapies Volunteer Coordinator, Jennifer will be supporting the Care Center and Home Care with a special focus on Integrative Therapies. Read more about Jennifer in following Breaking News.

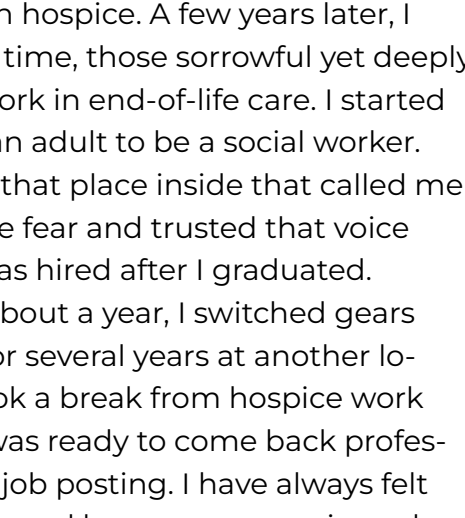
A reminder that if you are feeling under the weather, please alert us to your symptoms and especially if you have tested positive for Covid. While many of the Covid protocols have gone away, there are still requirements in place such as a mandatory quarantine period, masking upon return, etc. We are seeing an uptick in cases. Our goal is to protect our most vulnerable population – our patients, while also honoring your healing and recovery. We do not want you to push yourself to come in if you're not feeling well. Please rest up, healing and when you're feeling 100% then return. In the words of Bryant McGill, "taking care of yourself is the most powerful way to begin to take care of others."

And on this note, why not try something new for yourself. We're excited to see our book club expand with new members. This is a great way to meet your fellow volunteers and engage in meaningful conversation that isn't always directly related to the book we are reading. You can join for one week or for all sessions. We meet each Tuesday from 11am to noon via Zoom. We are currently reading *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* by Rachel Joyce, which is a tale about a gentleman's unlikely pilgrimage to meet his friend, Queenie who he just learned is in hospice. Determined to walk six hundred miles to the hospice, Harold believes that as long as he walks, Queenie will live. Our reading schedule is Week 1 – chapters 1-3 (pages 1-24); Week 2 – chapters 4-8 (pages 25 to 90); Week 3 – chapters 9 – 15 (pages 91 to 166); Week 4 – chapters 16 – 21 (pages 167 to 228); Week 5 - chapters 22 – 28 (pages 229 to 293); and finally Week 6 – chapters 29 - 32 (pages 294 to 320). One rule, we cannot read ahead which puts a fun twist on the Book Club. We hope you will join us. Here is the link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81306565401?pwd=ekJlqFbV-NOiZn4H07Zsyld9OxhlwC.1&from=addon>

Meet Jennifer

"You can't give your life more time, so give the time you have more life." Unknown.

This is a quote that was shared during my orientation. They shared it as a reminder that hospice isn't about the dying, it's about a celebration of LIFE and making more meaning in those days. I have always felt this way and I feel really good about being in community with others who do as well. Hello all. My name is Jennifer Norber and I am honored to join you as a new Integrative Therapies Volunteer Coordinator.



Growing up I had multiple losses that were more sudden and that grief was hard. When I was 20 I was blessed to be able to spend a few months saying goodbye to my Nana when she was on hospice. A few years later, I also lost a cousin who was on hospice. Unbeknownst to me at the time, those sorrowful yet deeply moving experiences planted a seed that sprouted years later, to work in end-of-life care. I started my hospice journey professionally when I went back to school as an adult to be a social worker. Originally, I was on track to work with youth but decided to honor that place inside that called me to hospice work. Even though I was scared to try, I stepped into the fear and trusted that voice gently nudging me on and I did my internship at a hospice and was hired after I graduated.

During that time I worked in volunteer administration. After about a year, I switched gears and I got my Masters in Lay Ministry and provided Spiritual Care for several years at another local hospice. In 2022 I was transferred to Grief Support and then took a break from hospice work professionally but continued on as a volunteer. Recently I knew I was ready to come back professionally to hospice and I was overcome with hope when I saw this job posting. I have always felt that volunteers hold such a special place on the hospice care team and have seen some incredibly touching moments through that work. Additionally, many of the interventions I used with patients and their loved ones fell under the integrative therapies umbrella. I am so very thankful to be given this opportunity and I look forward to meeting and serving with you all in the days to come.

"You can't give your life more time, so give the time you have more life." Unknown

So while this quote is a reminder of the work we do at end-of-life for others, to me it's also about the rewards I feel from being in this work. The time I choose to spend honoring others' lives, gives more life to the time I have here as well.

Bereavement News

By Becca Guenther, LMSW, CAGCS, CCTP
Grief Care Counselor

New Beginnings, Lasting Connections: A Guide to Grieving in the New Year

If you or someone you care for had a loss last year, you may also have noticed that the beginning of a new year brought up some unexpected grief. A common experience amongst grievers, beginning a new year in which your loved one is not physically present can be triggering, if not heart-breaking. Here is what we would like you to know about grief at the new year:

1. There's something precious about firsts and lasts in life. First breaths, first steps, and last breaths and steps, too. The fact that your person, at one point, was living and breathing in 2023 is important. Entering into a new place, knowing that our person will never be able to join us in the physical sense, can be so difficult for our grieving loved ones to grapple with.
2. What you are feeling is valid, even if it feels otherwise in your own mind. As human beings, we have been known to spend a lot of time trying to make sense of our experiences, thoughts, and emotions. It helps to understand the why behind the experience but there are some things that we will encounter that our logical minds cannot quite grasp. This human nature coupled with Grief, known for its unpredictable nature, may catch us off guard and leave us stuck wondering why we are feeling how we are feeling. Simply acknowledging the pain, even without fully grasping the reasons, is enough. It is enough to acknowledge that this hurts, even if you do not understand the why behind the feeling.
3. We need not know the "why" in order to seek out ways to nurture the grief triggers that arise. Instead of using all of your mental capacity and energy to understand why you are feeling this unexpected way, consider instead reserving some of your energy for nurturing and tending to your grief and the emotional experience you are having. Having an understanding of what triggered us absolutely serves a purpose, however it is just as important to remember to carve out time, space, and energy to be with our emotions and tend to them. Emotions can be felt and released even without knowing where they came from or why.
4. If you dread the idea of leaving your connection to your loved one in 2023, you may find comfort in learning more about Continuing Bonds Theory. In brief, Continuing Bonds speaks to the comfort that can arise when we learn new ways to connect with our loved ones that have died. This theory acknowledges that relationships are changed by death, but not ended because of it. Engaging in activities that foster your connection with your loved one(s) won't erase the pain but may alleviate the sorrow stemming from their physical absence in the new year.
5. Some ways you might feel closer to your person include visiting their favorite place(s), writing them letters, buying them cards on special days like birthdays, picking up one of their hobbies, finishing a project they had begun, or talking to them aloud or in your mind's eye. These actions can help maintain a connection despite the physical separation.

Remember, grieving is a unique and personal journey, and it's okay to seek support and find what works best for you in navigating the challenges of a new year without your loved one.

OUR FREE GRIEF CARE PROGRAMS:

While feelings of grief are normal, handling them can be difficult and painful. Talking about what you are going through can help. Call 734.779.6690 to schedule an appointment. Or visit www.askforangela.com to check out our grief support calendar with a detailed listing of upcoming support groups.

Care Center News

One of our most popular Integrative Therapies is aromatherapy. Volunteers are trained to offer, set up and provide aromatherapy that will diffuse in a patient's room, infusing the atmosphere with peace and calm. If you would like to be trained to provide this additional service, please send an email to voldept@angelahospice.us. Our team will ensure you are thoroughly trained to provide this popular service.

Likewise for our aromatherapy service volunteers, we're noticing that a few of our family members are bringing in their own oils and using them in our diffusers. As a health care facility specifically only used purity or therapeutic grade essential oils. If you notice a family member using their own oils or blend of oils, please bring it to our attention so we can redirect family members to bring in their own diffusers.

Community Outreach & Philanthropy

New year, stay tuned!

With 2024 officially in full swing we hope your year is off to a great start! We have so many exciting things coming up this year that we can't wait to tell you about and different volunteer opportunities as the year continues. Wishing you a blessed and wonderful year!

Calling all volunteers (to call)!

Our Golf Outing might not be until this summer, but we're already gearing up for the annual event! We're currently looking for a volunteer to call for Hole Sponsors, a vital role in continuing the connection with those who have donated and participated in the past for this event.

And don't worry if you've never done this before! We provide a script, as well as a list of names and phone numbers to call.

If you're interested, please contact Helen Balmforth at 734.953.6045 or email hbalmforth@angelahospice.us!

We're looking for weekly volunteers

Looking to do data entry? Filing? Or help out with all the different aspects that go into our events? Then you've found the right place to volunteer! The Community Outreach and Philanthropy department is seeking volunteers in those areas, among others, to volunteer each week. (Hours are at your convenience.) Let us know if this sounds like something you would want to do! Email hbalmforth@angelahospice.us.

Compassionate Corner

By Denise Welsh
Int. Therapies Vol. Coordinator

Burning Bowls and White Stone Ceremonies

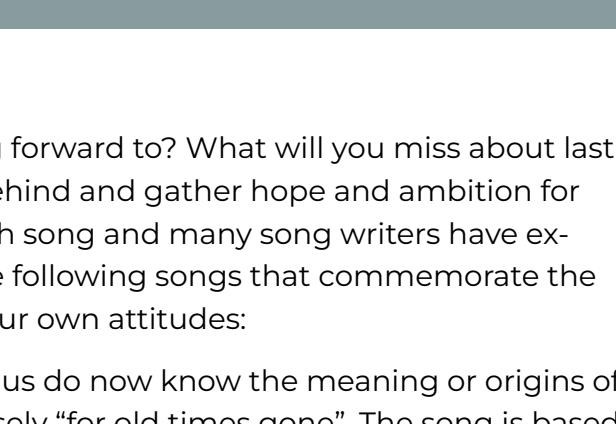
There are some faith traditions that hold burning bowl service on the last Sunday in December and a white stone ceremony on the first Sunday in January.

The tradition of the burning bowl ceremony is to write down the things that have not served you well in the past year on a piece of paper. Some examples might be to let go of negative thoughts/judgments of others, identify unhealthy habits you want to release (can be physical, emotional, mental), detrimental verbiage, unhealthy relationships, things that hold you back from your desired achievements or any other thing that comes to mind that you want to change in the new year. Once they are written down then you can either rip it up or burn it in a fireplace, outside in a fire pit or in a fire-safe container such as a glass or metal bowl. It is beneficial to also let go of all thoughts and feelings around these habits and actions that have kept you attached to them.

The White Stone ceremony that takes place on the first Sunday of the year is designed to provide you with a positive focus around something you want to improve on or incorporate in this new year in your life. Some churches provide square white stones that you hold in your hand as you enter into a time of prayer and meditation. As you breathe in deeply release all attachments to your thoughts and ask for a word or phrase of what is yours to embrace in the new year. A word such as joy, patience, kindness, loving others, discipline, faith, wisdom, understanding, etc may pop into your head and once it does you write it on the white stone if you have one or record it on something you can look at each day as a reminder to develop more fully this attribute in coming year.

Both of these ceremonies do not have to be done at the first of the year – you can do them anytime for things you would like to release or attributes that need attention and improvement. And remember: "You will enrich your life immeasurably if you approach it with a sense of wonder and discovery, and always challenge yourself to try new things." ~Nate Berkus

We would LOVE to hear about any special ceremonies you have that help you focus on new beginnings. To share, please email dwelsh@angelahospice.us.



Anke Sundermeier

Mission Moment

Sr. Roberta Moser
Felician Sisters Services

A thought for the new year: Happiness is the new rich. Inner peace is the new success. Health is the new wealth. Kindness is the new cool. And while we're at it, I want to know, if 50 is the new 30, why isn't Thursday the new Friday? Huh?

Where does time go? As we age, hopefully we come to know certain things. Things we don't pick up through formal schooling, but things we've picked up experientially. Like, for example, life is not about being rich, being popular, being highly educated or being perfect...it's about being real, being humble and being kind. Yes, being kind.

Anyone who has had stuffed animals growing up knows that over time they look really "used." Like the "Velveteen Rabbit." Ears get even more floppy. Eyes may fall off. The tail may go missing. The animal, however, is still a treasure, a constant companion. Someone who knows our secrets.

In our ministries we are called to be real. In our life we are called to be real. To a large degree, the measure of being real is determined by how much we are able to live in the present moment. Irrespective of what happened yesterday or last year, and what may or may not happen tomorrow, the present moment is where we are, always.

Some of us live as if life were a dress rehearsal for some later date. It isn't. Now is the only time we have. Being real is understanding that ours is the very spot you are to make the next best move all at once, but of stretching out to mend the part of the world that is within our reach. Any small, calm thing that we can do to help another, to assist some portion of our corner of the planet will help immensely. Live NOW! BE REAL! Be humble and be kind. Yes, be kind!

Spiritual Care News

There are so many happenings here that move our spirits. For me, this week it was an email that I received from one of our volunteers. With his permission, I have shared it with you. It perfectly captures how we honor one's spirit.

From Volunteer John Kanitra

"I'm reading a book called *Witness to Hope* a biography of Pope John Paul II by George Weigel. (I wouldn't have bought it if I knew it was 900 pages-haha) I came across a quote that reminded me of Angela Hospice. When I was in hospice it being 'patient autonomy' was emphasized. This is soon after he was shot and was still in the hospital in 1981. They said he was an active (engaged) patient, wanting to know what was going on and why. The doctors would gather for a consultation in a meeting room. The Pope would joke "What did the Sanhedrin say about me today?" "What did the Sanhedrin decide on my behalf?" Although he was joking the joke had an edge on it. Part of the struggle of an illness, he once told his doctors, was that a patient had to fight to become "the subject of his illness" instead of simply remaining the "object of treatment". The dignity of the human person was not surrendered at the hospital door. I like the way he said it and thought I would share it." Thank you for sharing this compelling illustration of one of our core values - Respect for Human Dignity.

Feel inspired to share how your experience at Angela Hospice has moved your spirit? Email tschmitchen@angelahospice.us to share.

We Honor Veterans

Are you or someone you know a caregiver for a Veteran? The VA now has a comprehensive program to support caregivers of Veterans. The program titled CAGCSS (Program of General Caregiver Support Services) shares its mission which is to serve caregivers with respect and service excellence through a wide range of support, education and tools that empower them to care for themselves and the Veteran. This program offers many services including skill training, mental health counseling, health and well-being coaching, telephone support and online programming to caregivers of Veterans enrolled in VA care. This program was initially established in 2008 to support Veterans and caregivers of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts as unprecedented Veterans were returning home with significant injuries-physical, emotional and mental, with very little support systems in place. The program has now expanded to support caregivers of Veterans through all war eras. To learn more about this program, please visit www.caregiver.va.gov.

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